

Man sentenced to death wins new parole hearing

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SAN FRANCISCO — A Pinole man twice given the death penalty for the rape-murders of two 15-year-old girls won a new parole hearing Thursday from the state Supreme Court.

However, the parole date set at the hearing could be even further away than his present 1990 date, the court noted.

The decision affects from 500 to 1,500 of 3,000 inmates currently in prison with life sentences, Board of Prison Terms official Joan Cavanaugh said. The decision will not automatically

shorten any prison terms.

Dennis Stanworth, now 43, was sentenced to die in 1966 for the rape-murders of Susan Box and Caree Collison near Pt. Pinole.

His death penalty was reversed in 1969 because some prospective jurors were improperly excused from serving on his jury.

Given a new trial, he was again sentenced to death in 1974. The sentence was modified to life with possibility of parole because the state Supreme Court had, in 1972, outlawed the death penalty law under which he was convicted.

In 1979, Stanworth was deemed ready for

parole because he had been participating in therapy and had an excellent work and conduct record in prison.

The Community Release Board set a release date of 1990 under the standards set by the 1976 Determinate Sentencing Law.

Stanworth appealed, saying he had a right to have his release date computed under standards set by the Indeterminate Sentencing Law, which was in effect at the time he was sentenced.

The Supreme Court unanimously agreed that convicts sentenced under the indeterminate law should be treated the same.